

ACT Climate Change Council

Minister Simon Corbell
Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development
ACT Assembly
GPO Box 1020, Canberra, ACT 2601

Dear Minister

As you aware, the ACT Climate Change Council has been recently established to provide advice to you as Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development on reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and addressing, and adapting to, climate change.

On behalf of the ACT Climate Change Council, I wish to commend you and the ACT Government on preparing this Action Plan and continuing the challenge of implementing a 'pathway to a sustainable and carbon neutral ACT'. The opportunities for the ACT are considerable and the initial engagement with the community and business sector has been a very positive step forward.

The ACT Climate Change Council is pleased to provide the following comments on *Weathering the Change Draft Action Plan 2, 2011- 2060*. The Council's comments on the draft action plan are at a 'high' level at this stage recognizing that we have an ongoing opportunity to advise you on these matters. We this in mind we make the following submission:

1. Action to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change should be taken in the broader context of the evolution and development of the ACT and the region. The broader regional perspective, particularly in relation to the environment, will be essential to solving many of the issues e.g. supply of renewable energy. The ACT Government is encouraged to work closely with surrounding councils in the Australian Capital Region to ensure an integrated regional response to climate change.

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2. The importance of continuing wider community engagement in developing a climate change action program is highlighted and supported. Collaboration and partnership will be key to effective implementation over the long term.
3. Action Plan 2 discusses a number of options to reduce the ACT's emissions footprint. The Council suggests that the specific pathways identified in the Action Plan ought to be seen as illustrative. Any suitable strategy is likely to involve many different options. The choice of a specific combination depends on a range of factors, and any chosen strategy may need to be adjusted over time.
4. Taking a long-term perspective beyond 2020 is important. Decisions and actions now that might help to meet the 2020 target may compromise the achievement of the long-term 2060 target. A review of the long-term consequences of the 'Action plan' is highly recommended.
5. Adaptation to climate change is a critical component to an integrated response and should be considered as a priority in any 'action plan'. The ACT Government has the opportunity to lead nationally in this relatively under developed policy area. The Council considers that the draft Action Plan does not give sufficient weight to the issue of 'adaptation' and strongly recommends that this be strengthened in the revised Action Plan
6. The ACT emissions target and related policies present a chance to demonstrate how a community can reduce its carbon footprint quickly, opening new opportunities and without undue sacrifice of other community goals.
7. The Council recognizes that this Action Plan is the next step in a continuing program of policy reform in relation to climate change. The ACT Government is in a unique position to demonstrate a coordinated response at both the Territory and local level.
8. Action on the built environment, transport and energy are fundamental to any transformation. The Action Plan needs to 'join the dots' with related strategies including

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the ACT Planning Strategy, the Transport Plan for Canberra, the Sustainable Energy Strategy and the Sustainable Waste Strategy. Strategic decisions in these areas for long-term benefit must not be prejudiced by short-term actions, such as compromising the reserved corridors for future rapid transit options by short-term development activities or by locking the ACT into or out of specific energy supply options at large scale.

9. A continuing public education program is considered essential and the members of the Council would be pleased to contribute to facilitating public discussion. The approach by the national Climate Commission provides an excellent example.

10. A process of review and monitoring will be essential to ensuring progress on the implementation of the Action Plan and that the outcomes are on track to achieving a 'sustainable and carbon neutral ACT'.

The ACT Climate Change Council looks forward to providing further advice as appropriate and would be pleased to discuss the above points with you at your convenience

Yours sincerely

Professor Barbara Norman
Chair, ACT Climate Change Council
1 March 2012